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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

I write to request that you make an appointment to fill the position of Special Assistant to the President for Agriculture, Trade, and Food Assistance (Special Assistant) as soon as possible. This fall's delayed harvest is just the latest in an ongoing host of challenges faced by our farmers and ranchers, which include ever-increasing input costs, expanding government regulations, and unpredictable foreign markets. They deserve to have their voices heard at the White House.

It is of great concern to me that after almost a year into this Administration, this important post remains vacant. As you know, U.S. Code, Title 7, Section 1736-1 requires the President to appoint a Special Assistant. It is extremely important that you nominate someone to this position as soon as possible, to provide you with sound advice regarding agricultural exports and the implementation of U.S. food aid programs, both of which are central to the success of the American farmer and rancher. Expanding exports is especially critical to the viability of many farming operations during this time of global economic downturn.

American farmers and ranchers literally feed the world, and play an increasingly important role in our nation's energy security. In my home state of Nebraska, one out of every three jobs is connected to agriculture.

Despite the importance of agriculture to our nation, I am concerned that many of the initiatives and policies advanced by this Administration run counter to supporting productivity in agriculture: an unclear trade policy; advocating a cap-and-trade system that will have a disproportionately negative impact on agriculture, especially in the Midwest; an overactive Environmental Protection Agency; and an un-fulfilled promise to hold a rural summit within your first 100 days in office.

Appointing an advocate for American agriculture to the Special Assistant post would be a step in the right direction for agriculture. I appreciate your consideration of this request. The courtesy of a prompt response would be appreciated.

Very truly yours



Mike Johanns
United States Senator

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